

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 EUR-12 EA-10 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-13

PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 893

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MEXICO CITY

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIBREVILLE 924

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP, GB, AC, BA, CA, KN, KS, MX, TS

SUBJ: GABONESE AUSTERITY MEASURES: DECISION TO CLOSE EMBASSIES

REF: (A) 77 LIBREVILLE 3087 (NOTAL) (B) 77 LIBREVILLE A-73
(NOTAL)

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED: GOG ANNOUNCED APRIL 17 DECISION
TO CLOSE EMBASSIES IN KUWAIT, BAHRAIN, NORTH KOREA, AND MEXICO
IN APPLICATION OF AUSJRITY MEASURES AND DIPLOMATIC RECIPROCITY.
IN ADDITION GABONESE REPRESENTATION TO UNESCO WILL BE
"MODIFIED" TO REDUCE EXPENSES BY ASSIGNING RESPONSIBILITY
FOR UNESCO MATTERS TO THE DCM OF GABONESE EMBASSY IN PARIS.
A DECISION TO MAINTAIN OR CLOSE EMBASSIES IN ALGIERS AND
TUNIS, ACCORDING TO THE ANNOUNCEMENT, IS UNDER STUDY.

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2. IN A RELATED BELT-TIGHTENING MEASURE, FOREIGN
MINISTER BONGO WARNED ALL GABONESE AMBASSADORS ABROAD
THAT THEY MUST CEASE THEIR FREQUENT AND UNNECESSARY
TRAVELS FROM THE POSTS OF THEIR ASSIGNMENT. HE THREATENED
THE AMBASSADORS THAT SEVERE MEASURES WOULD BE TAKEN AGAINST
ANYONE WHO LEFT HIS POST WITHOUT EXPRESS PERMISSION FROM
THE PRESIDENT OR FOREIGN MINISTER. END UNCLASSIFIED.

3. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL: COMMENT: THE CLOSING OF SEVERAL EMBASSIES HAD BEEN DISCUSSED SEVERAL TIMES SINCE THE DECLARATION OF AUSTERITY MEASURES. MEXICO CITY IS IN FACT, ALREADY CLOSED (REF B). THE NORTH KOREANS, HOWEVER, APPARENTLY GOT STUCK FOR POLITICAL REASONS (REF A) RATHER THAN RECIPROCITY BECAUSE THEY MAINTAIN AN EMBASSY IN LIBREVILLE. IN FACT, NORTH KOREA HAD A LARGE DELEGATION AT GABON'S MARCH 12 RENOVATION DAY CELEBRATIONS DURING WHICH A NORTH KOREAN BUILT STATUE OF BONGO WAS INAUGURATED. GABON'S EMBASSIES IN MANAMA AND KUWAIT, OPENED PRIMARILY BECAUSE OF THE OPEC AFFILIATION, ARE IN FACT BEING CLOSED FOR AUSTERITY AND RECIPROCITY REASONS. WE WOULD GUESS THAT UNLESS ALGERIA AND TUNISIA OPEN EMBASSIES IN LIBREVILLE, GABON WILL CLOSE THESE TWO EMBASSIES AFTER BONGM'S TENURE AS OAU CHAIRMAN IS UP IN JULY. THE GABONESE PICK AND CHOOSE ON RECIPROCITY HOWEVER. THERE WAS NO MENTION OF OTHER COUNTRIES WITHOUT RESIDENT MISSIONS SUCH AS SAUDI ARABIA, CANADA AND THE UK (ALTHOUGH WE UNDERSTAND THE LATER WILL BE OPENING A MISSION BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR). YATES

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